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ESIT EKET & EKET COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATIONS FRONTIER OIL LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROJECT

For over 20 years Pro-Natura has been engaged in community development activities within Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta. One outstanding result born out of a beneficial partnership with Frontier Oil is our work since 2007 on the sustainable development of the Eket and Esit Eket communities.

As Phil Hall, OBE, Founder of Pro-Natura Nigeria explains, "Over the years, Pro-Natura has evolved a prize-winning, holistic and bottom-up participatory development model, which, by empowering communities to formulate their own developmental plans, has proven to be both impactful and successful. Frontier's annual contribution has allowed us to address and demonstrably improve many of the problems of the Delta's Eket communities."

Eket, with a population of over 200,000 people, is the second largest city in [Akwa Ibom State](#), on [Nigeria's](#) coast. The entire urban area, which includes Esit Eket, has a combined population of nearly 400,000. Prior to the discovery, exploitation and eventual export of oil, the major occupation of the Akwa Ibom people was fishing and farming. Oil spillages, arising from the activities of oil companies operating the Qua Iboe Oil Field, have however dramatically affected the traditional economic activities of the Eket and Esit Eket Communities.

Frontier's CSR involvement was designed to address these issues by building upon Pro-Natura's two decades of experience in participatory community development in the area which includes its flagship project the Akassa Development Foundation.

Frontier's seed funding allowed for the establishment of "Community Development Foundations," institutions designed to represent stakeholders' best interests by effectively allowing them to define their needs and aspirations through a Community Development Plan they created.



Chief Bill Knight, OBE, the creator and original driving force behind our Akassa Development Program, remains an active member of the Akassa National Council of Chiefs.

Pro-Natura International

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Developing Local Institutions

The Eket and Esit Eket community Development Foundations were created in 2008. To ensure the long-term sustainability of these institutions, Pro-Natura carries out a continuous programme of capacity building training. The participants include staff of both foundations and community stakeholders such as members of the Board of Trustees, the Community Representatives Assembly and the Community Interface Body. The objectives of the training is to educate them on sustainable participatory community development processes as well as to increase their capacity to establish and operate an effective local governance structure. Some training also focussed on advocacy and fund raising to further support the efforts and activities of the foundations and raise additional funds.



Pro-Natura facilitator clarifying issues at members training workshop

Youth development and empowerment: the Skills Acquisition Programme

Since their creation in 2008, the Eket Community Development and the Esit Eket Community Development Foundations have trained and graduated over 500 indigenous youths in diverse skills such as Desktop Publishing, Fashion Design, Carpentry, Catering and Hotel Management to name a few.

Upon graduation, students receive starter packs (such as sewing machines) to start their own businesses. Whilst some of the beneficiaries secured jobs with local companies, others set up small-scale businesses with multiplier effects. For example, some of the graduates of fashion designing set up shops and now have trainees of their own thereby replicating the acquired skill. Some of the Desktop Publishing graduates support the foundations by training new trainees – a virtuous circle.

To further support committed graduates, they are presented with an empowerment package after one or two years of successfully running their own small-scale businesses. Such packages have included generators, freezers, sewing machines, weaving machines.



Idara Abia displaying her Hat and Bead products



Graduate Trainees & Empowerment Items

32 year old Harrison David Udo, a recent graduate, acquired skills in Desktop Publishing that enabled him to establish a computer business centre. "I thank God" he says today "for the skills I acquired through the Esit Eket Foundation – they have transformed my life!"

Frontier's CRS's funding has also allowed a number of community development projects including water wells, the construction and rehabilitation of town halls, schools and community structures.

Through these initiatives, local youths are empowered to provide better support to their families, essentially making them self-reliant and responsible members of the society. These programs have measurably reduced crime, extreme hunger and poverty within these localities.

Education Intervention Projects

In 2013, the Eket and Esit Eket Community Development Foundations expanded their support. This initiative provides support to local public schools, improving attendance and academic performance of local pupils. Some of the public schools targeted include the Community Secondary School Akpautong, Eket Modern High School Ekpene Obo and National High School Etebi in Esit Eket LGA, among others.

The Education Intervention Program provides teaching aids, donates school furniture for pupils and teachers, renovates dilapidated classroom blocks, science laboratories and libraries, and donates textbooks and scientific equipment.

To introduce a participatory process and to ensure ownership of these projects, Pro-Natura has ensured that members of the local community are always directly involved in the planning and implementation of the projects right from the inception to the completion phases.

Pro-Natura continues to strive to improve local institutions and the community Development Foundation's impact on developing local communities. It is our aim to also replicate this model in diverse communities in Nigeria. ■

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Mr. Harrison David Udo now owns computer business centre



Stakeholders during the commissioning of Idim Afia Water project